

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 9, 2009

Chairman Dave Obey
House Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor, Health, and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies
Room 2358 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Ranking Member Todd Tiahrt
House Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor, Health, and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Obey and Ranking Member Tiahrt:

We are writing in full support of President Obama's (FY) 2010 budget request of \$1.149 billion for the national service programs administered by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS).

America is facing unprecedented challenges – unemployment is on the rise, health care costs are high, and every 26 seconds another student gives up on school. With our public needs intensifying in this economic downturn, there is no better time to make a significant investment in our nation's service and social innovation infrastructure.

National service is a tangible and meaningful way for citizens to share in the responsibility of seeing us through these challenging times, and Americans of all ages and backgrounds stand ready to serve. Service programs are reporting a huge influx of applications, double or triple the number received one year ago. While the volunteers are pouring in to help, we must invest in the service organizations and the innovative nonprofits that can help us meet our nation's growing need with high-quality, high-impact service opportunities. Service is also an innovative way to deal with extraordinary job loss, providing participants with training that prepares them for future employment and, in some cases, post-service education awards that can make high education more attainable.

Earlier this year, Congress answered President Obama's call to service with passage of the Serve America Act, sweeping legislation to reauthorize and expand our national service programs, which have not been reauthorized in 16 years. The bill renews our commitment to national service, directing resources to areas and issues where it can make the biggest impact. The bill also ushers in a new era of responsibility, improving the Corporation's ability to oversee and manage its programs, easing administrative burdens on grantees and strengthening accountability.

The strong bipartisan support for the Serve America Act demonstrates the views of Congress that the Corporation's national and community service programs must be part of the solution. We urge you to seize this historic moment and fund these new and existing national service programs at the \$1.149 billion level requested by President Obama.

This funding would provide much needed capacity to community and faith-based organizations and units of state and local government that must address a spiking demand for social services with fewer resources. This federal investment would expand opportunities for millions of Americans to serve at every stage of life, invest in creative new solutions to some of our most pressing problems, and leverage exponentially more local volunteers and non-federal resources to improve the lives of millions of people in the United States. We believe this is a wise investment that will pay off many times over, strengthening communities, improving our national well-being and making service a key component of civic responsibility.

We recognize that the Subcommittee faces many competing priorities, but there has never been a greater need for citizen service. We appreciate your past support of national service programs, and we thank you in advance for your continued support.

Sincerely,



David Price
Member of Congress
Co-Chair, National Service Caucus



Doris Matsui
Member of Congress
Co-Chair, National Service Caucus



Vernon J. Ehlers
Member of Congress
Co-Chair, National Service Caucus



Todd Russell Platts
Member of Congress
Co-Chair, National Service Caucus



Mazie K. Hirono
Member of Congress



John P. Sarbanes
Member of Congress

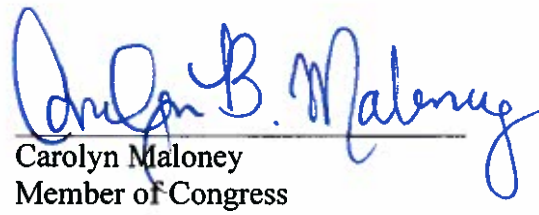


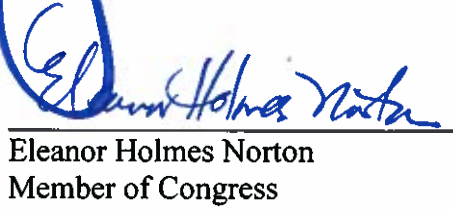
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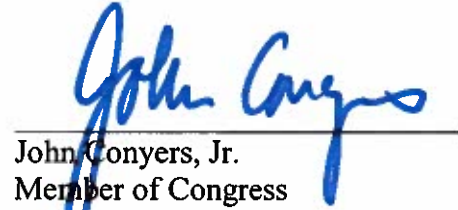


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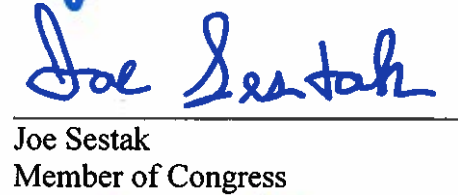

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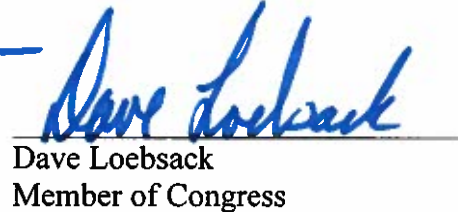

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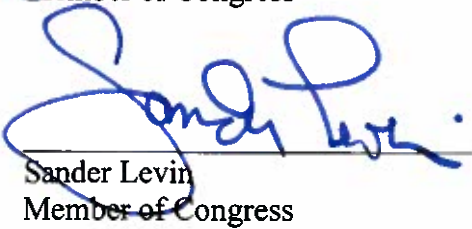

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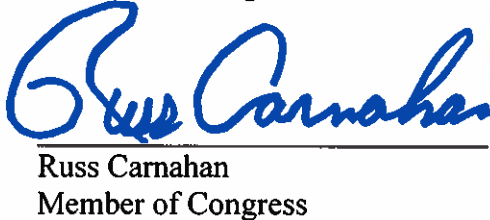

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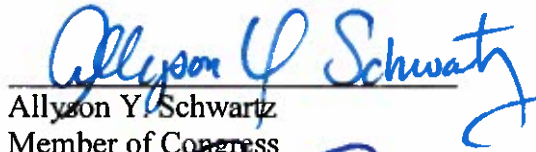

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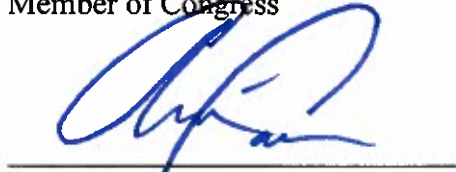
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